

VZCZCXRO2745  
PP RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV  
DE RUEHKH #0607/01 1111336  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 201336Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0598  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0166  
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000607

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR D, R, ECA FOR PDAS CROUCH, AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON,  
AF/SPG, S/CRS, DRL  
NSC FOR PBITTMAN AND CHUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [SCUL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: STUDENTS COMPLAIN OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON POLITICAL  
AFFILIATION AND GEOGRAPHY

REF: A) KHARTOUM 329  
B) KHARTOUM 371

¶1. This is an action cable, please see para 8.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: In two separate meetings with university leaders the week of April 13, SPLM-affiliated students and members of the Darfur Students Union complained of discriminatory support for students based on party affiliation and geography. Both groups requested further U.S. support for vulnerable student populations, as Sudanese institutions favor NCP-affiliated students over opposition youth (especially from the SPLM and SLM-Abdul Wahid) and students from historically marginalized groups in South and West (Darfur) Sudan. END SUMMARY

SPLM-AFFILIATED STUDENT ORGANIZATION  
- - - - -

¶3. (SBU) On April 17, CDA Fernandez met Tariq Koko, the Director of the Office for Student Support of the Sudanese Organization for Youth Development (SOYD). (Note: As Koko told poloff, SOYD is an organization founded by the SPLM that attempts to implement SPLM ideas in a nonpartisan manner for the support of all Sudanese students. End Note.) Koko stated that political parties, especially the NCP, use financial support to recruit new party members. He said that money is the biggest challenge facing students, and that politically active students affiliated with the opposition, especially the SPLM, often receive unfair treatment from professors and administrators. "SPLM students are often thrown out of the university and experience very negative treatment," said Koko.

¶4. (SBU) Koko said that he would appreciate further U.S. support for political training programs such as those facilitated by the International Republican Institute (IRI). Koko encouraged the U.S. to consider supporting educational initiatives not and not just short-term training through political parties, but through civil society organizations. He said that partnering with the Khartoum State Ministry of Education (the Minister belongs to the Umma Party) and other branches of the government would prevent hardliners in the government from attempting to undermine U.S. support for educational initiatives. He said that a multi-party, multi-institutional approach would decrease the level of controversy and provide mechanisms of oversight and cooperation needed to make sure that resources are properly utilized and monitored. He said that the Minister of Education of Khartoum State has indicated that he is willing to cooperate with civil society organizations such as Koko's. He stated that as Khartoum State has the majority of universities in Sudan, it would therefore be most logical to first focus on Khartoum State. Koko emphasized that other universities in

Darfur, the East, and the South have also been neglected and need support. Sudan's oppressed Southern and Darfuri students (especially those who are politically active) are often shunted to these third-rate schools if not to Sudan's private, for-profit universities - if they can afford them.

#### DARFUR STUDENTS UNION

- - - - -

15. (SBU) On April 13, three leaders of the Darfur Students Union in Khartoum told poloff that the plight of Darfur's students has deteriorated significantly in the last several years. According to these leaders there are approximately 20,000 students from Darfur studying in Khartoum, and that last year alone 300 of them dropped out due to extreme poverty, political oppression, and overall marginalization within Khartoum's universities. "In the street there is no racism or prejudice against anyone from Darfur, but at universities it is different," stated one leader of the Darfur Students Union. According to these sources, the government tries to divide Darfur students along ethnic lines and that even though their student association is apolitical "the government treats any group from Darfur as though it is a political party."

16. (SBU) These sources stated that in the past there was significant government support for students, but that now, rent, university fees, and other living expenses prohibit most students from Darfur from being able to study at institutions of higher education. They stated that there are some students who are essentially homeless, alternating between sleeping at friends' homes and on the street. They added that the National Student Support Fund should be a non-partisan institution that helps students regardless of their party affiliation, but that in practice it is just a funding mechanism for NCP students. These three leaders (from the Ma'aliya, Arab Beni Halba, and non-Arab Fur tribes) emphasized that their

KHARTOUM 00000607 002 OF 002

organization is one of the very groups that has many different tribes from Darfur working together peacefully and for a common goal.

#### COMMENT

- - - - -

17. (SBU) These meetings during the week of April 13 follow many others (reftels) where Sudanese students have complained of discriminatory support for students based on party affiliation and geography. More direct U.S. support for marginalized Sudanese students would be a good investment in the U.S.'s future relationship with Sudan, as this programming will help support the next generation of leaders in Sudan. Post will explore possible means of assisting the students and their organizations, and will also explore further collaboration with the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations with a focus on Sudan's neglected students.

18. (SBU) Embassy recommends that AF urgently work with R and ECA to explore options towards establishing a modest in-country scholarship fund at private Sudanese universities for marginalized Darfuri and South Sudanese students.

FERNANDEZ